

Spiritual Disciplines Series - Spring 2006 - King's Centre Church

Submission (12.03.06)

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NOTE: This sermon is much better *heard* than read – it was given as a story. This is a basic transcript, but not exactly true to the actual talk. You can listen to the recording here:

www.kingscentreonline.com/library.shtml

I'm going to tell you some stories today, you and I are going to pick out together some lessons about submission.

Background –Israel ask for a King - Samuel to anoint Saul as leader (or 'ruler') of God's people

Spirit of the Lord comes upon Saul and he becomes 'a different person'

- has early supports, and early dissenters "how can this fellow save us?" (he was 30 yrs old)
- Saul **stays silent**

- Starts out well – first military action is successful - Spirit – Saul galvanises the people
- But Saul is a bit of a hot-head – Supposed to wait 7 days (Samuel's instructions) – Instead he attacks Philistine outpost
- Philistines respond - 3000 chariots - Israelites scared - very dangerous situation - actions into his own hands

- Saul is under pressure etc – takes on the wrong responsibility

- **Just bc he was King, did not mean he should not be submitted**

- Proud? Afraid? Arrogant? Hot-headed, when the chips down suddenly disregards God (**Sound familiar?**)

- Result? – Saul's family line will not inherit the kingship

Similar situation later –God wants Saul to attack the Amalekites

- Saul and his men don't kill or destroy the 'choice' men or possessions.- **contempt for God**

- Samuel & Saul interchange When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions." 14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?" 15 Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

From then on Samuel refused to see Saul ever again. **Break-down in relationship, by haughty attitude, disobedience, sadness + regret**

- Samuel is sent by God to anoint David as the future king (secretly)

- Spirit of God comes on him now (and had departed from Saul)

- God removed his blessing from the one who would not submit to Him (Saul)

- Saul is in mental turmoil now - evil spirit - recommends David as a good harp player

- David enters Saul the King's service, even tho he knew he would be king

- **Chose to serve someone else's vision – that's submission**

David & Goliath

- David was submitted to God– faith & trust in God in dangerous circumstances

- David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.
- Submit to God is our first call
 - **David knew who he was in the sight of God, he knew who GOD was, so he had confidence to submit, and to stand up for God at the right times (eg Goliath)**
- Some say submission means losing your own identity – David Self-image in GOD (not self-hatred)

Covenant

- David & Jonathan make a covenant of friendship and loyalty (royal robe & armour)
 - a sign of loyalty, love, equality, service
 - **MUTUAL SUBMISSION**
 - **Christian calling – “a community of mutual servants in mutual submission” (Eph 5:21. Phil 2:3)**
 - we care about what each other cares about,
 - we show regard for each other, we listen
 - We serve our neighbours with unconditional love

Saul gets jealous

- David is very successful - promoted by Saul
 - the people singing “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.”
 - Saul gets jealous – sees David as a threat to the throne
 - **Godly leadership means recognising the potential in others, and releasing it – to reach the best that God has for them**
 - Those in authority must be servants (Marj sermon)
 - Someone being better, or successful that you shouldn't be a threat.
 - Submission means **service – a willingness to promote others interests ahead of your own**
 - **Submission means we value other people** - Their dreams and issues become important to ours
 - Hard to do? – keep perspective – who *you* are submitted to in turn

Saul gets jealous

- **Our happiness should not be dependent upon getting what we want**
 - Not what the world tells you in its advertising!
 - **The Discipline of Submission brings Freedom**
 - Strange but true!! Upside-down kingdom
 - The ability to lay down the burden of always needing to **get our own way**
 - Released to drop the matter, to forget it
 - Most splits are caused by an unwillingness to let go of our control, our own way
 - Submission = brings our spirit where it is no longer controlled like this
 - **Self-denial means the freedom to give away to others** – to put their interests above ours
 - **Jesus's teaching = the way to self-fulfillment is through self-denial (CROSS)**
- Many church splits – bc people do not have the freedom to give in to each other.
 - They say it's a critical issue, sacred principle. RARELY TRUE!!
 - Often, we're fighting to save our pride
 - Submission means developing your spirit so that **you can give way**.
 - Listen to LORD - distinguish between real issues, and stubborn selfishness

Saul could have made better use of the Discipline of Silence here

- The last time, he kept his tongue wisely
- **Silence fits well – often the best way to submit is to say nothing**
 - grace - sets us and the other party free
- Saul this time, pride, fear perhaps, jealousy, the need to be the centre of attention....
All get it in the way

David is continually successful in his military campaigns – because the Lord was blessing him

- Eventually, Saul instructs his men and Jonathan to kill David.
- Jon refused. Warns David – Jonathan talks to Saul and persuades him

What do you do when the authority you are submitted to is unjust, or ungodly? (Whether in church or secular?)

Bible = generally be subject to the law of the state (1 Peter 2:13-14)

- HAVE INTEGRITY in your heart and obey the law (Jesus - taxes to Caesar etc)
- Submit to God's appointed and anointed leaders - those in spiritual authority over you (Hebrews 13:17 & 1 Tim 5:17-19)
 - Youth & **small group leaders**
 - spiritual leaders will **themselves be subject to God's judgement** (James 3:1)
- **The limit of submission? When it becomes destructive**
 - eg. govt opposed to the fundamentals of the kingdom (eg. ban preaching the gospel) then you have to keep the faith
 - Professionalism sometimes – your professional role says you can't speak about Jesus... but
- But the **biblical response** is **not 'destructive'** back (eg. like for like) - a willingness to suffer the consequences of standing up for what is right in God's eyes
 - Eg. Martin Luther King & non-violence
- You refuse, but not in a spirit of arrogance
 - Stand up for Christ, but in love towards other people, in humility
- How do you decide? There is no easy 'law' to apply in each case
 - Deep dependence on the HS

David escapes – becomes fugitive - gathers band of follows who are outlaws

- Saul chases David with Army (for 1 yr 4 months)
- David thought-up some good **Psalms** in the process
- Saul's men come looking for David in the 'Crag of the Wild Goats'
 - Saul as a wee in the cave where David is hiding.
 - First David cuts off the corner of his robe
 - conscience-stricken - "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."
 - shouts to Saul, and bows before him (NOW THAT'S SUBMISSION!)
 - He **reasons** with Saul, in humility
 - **His response to injustice was not injustice! OR violence**

David understood God-given authority, and was ready to submit to it.

- Saul was the King – David refused to harm him
- **We've got to submit to the idea of submission!** (as with all the disciplines)
 - o It happens out of care for the other person or authority
 - o Out of compassion – giving 2 hoots
 - When Saul & Jonathan die - David mourns – He CARED ABOUT THE PERSON not just the ISSUE
 - That is how 1 Samuel Ends

What lessons can we learn from the lives of David and Saul?

- **self-denial is right and the way to self-fulfilment.**
 - o **The upside down kingdom.**
- Jesus put it this way: **"Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it,"**

SUMMARY

In the Bible – God says:

- "If your sense of what is right and wrong doesn't square with mine, submit yours."
- "If your ego collides with someone else's in a conflict, consider submitting yours."
- "If your resources can meet another person's need, consider submitting yours."

FIRST:

- Submit yourselves to God
 - o Ask him to search you & know you
 - o Live it out by acts of service - counter-balance to our 'me me me' attitude
- Reflect on where in your life you find it difficult to submit to God.
 - o Ask God & HS to reveal to how and why.
 - o Use the other Disciplines

THEN

- Study your relationships with others (and work, authorities etc)
 - o Where can't you submit, and why?
 - o Are you like Saul or like David?
- Look for evidence of self-pity: the "poor me" - martyrdom syndrome
 - o Ask God to speak about your identify and need
- Practice the Discipline of Submission
 - o Its an active thing, it's a choice

I want to have a heart like David had in 1 Samuel. A heart after God, recognising God's hand – even in the King Saul – and submitting in obedience and love to that authority.

I want to be like David who was able to write this (Psalm 25)

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;

2 in you I trust, O my God.
Do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

3 No one whose hope is in you
will ever be put to shame,
but they will be put to shame
who are treacherous without excuse.

4 Show me your ways, O LORD,
teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.

6 Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you are good, O LORD.